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REPORT U.S. TALKED TO PLO SECRETLY UNDER FOUR PRESIDENTS
LOS ANGELES (AP) - DESPITE AN OFFICIAL POLICY PROHIBITING
NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION, U.S.
OFFICIALS HAVE TALKED SECRETLY TO THE TERRORIST GROUP FOR SEVEN YEARS,
THE LOS ANGELES TIMES REPORTS.

DISCUSSIONS ON ISSUES RANGING FROM THE SAFETY OF AMERICAN DIPLOMATS
TO THE CHANCES FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE HAVE BEEN HELD WITH THE PLO
UNDER PRESIDENTS NIXON, FORD, CARTER AND REAGAN, THE NEWSPAPER SAID IN
ITS SUNDAY EDITIONS.

THE OFFICIAL POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES IS THAT IT WILL NOT DEAL
WITH THE PLO AS LONG AS THE GUERRILLAS REFUSE TO RECOGNIZE ISRAEL'S
RIGHT TO EXIST.

BUT THE TIMES SAID IT HAS LEARNED FROM SOURCES IN WASHINGTON AND
BEIRUT, LEBANON, THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS BEEN TALKING TO THE PLO
MORE OFTEN THAN NOT.

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON WERE NOT AVAILABLE FOR
COMMENT SATURDAY NIGHT ON THE TIMES STORY.

HENRY KISSINGER, SECRETARY OF STATE UNDER PRESIDENTS NIXON AND FORD,
BEGAN THE CLANDESTINE TALKS IN 1974, THE TIMES SAID IN ITS STORY FROM
WASHINGTON.

THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION MADE TWO ATTEMPTS TO BRING THE PLO INTO
PEACE TALKS WITH ISRAEL, CARRYING ON EXTENSIVE INDIRECT TALKS WITH PLO
CHIEF YASSER ARAFAT, THE NEWSPAPER SAID.

AND DESPITE HIS DESCRIPTION OF THE PLO AS "A GANG OF THUGS," THE
REAGAN ADMINISTRATION HAS QUIETLY CONTINUED LOW-LEVEL CONTACTS WITH
THE PLO THROUGH THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY AND THE U.S. EMBASSY
IN BEIRUT, THE TIMES SAID.

THE TIMES SAID THAT THE CIA AND THE PLO HAVE EXCHANGED INFORMATION,
AND THAT THE CIA'S CHIEF CONTACT IN THE PLO WAS ARAFAT'S CHIEF OF
INTELLIGENCE.

THAT MAN, ALI HASSAN SALAMEH, WAS ACCUSED BY ISRAEL OF PLANNING THE
PLO KILLING OF 11 MEMBERS OF THE ISRAELI OLYMPIC TEAM AT MUNICH,
AUSTRIA, IN 1972. SALAMEH WAS KILLED IN A BOMB BLAST IN BEIRUT IN
1976.

1 of 2

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THE MOST PUBLICIZED ADMISSION BY WASHINGTON OF ITS CONTACTS WITH THE PLO CAME AFTER THE SEIZURE OF AMERICAN HOSTAGES IN IRAN; WHEN ARAFAT WAS ASKED TO INTERCEDE WITH THE IRANIAN MILITANTS.

THE DIRECT CONTACTS BETWEEN THE BEIRUT EMBASSY AND THE PLO HAVE CONCERNED THE SAFETY OF THE EMBASSY, WHICH IS IN PALESTINIAN-CONTROLLED TERRITORY IN LEBANON; SAID THE TIMES.

THOSE TALKS HAVE OCCASIONALLY SLIPPED INTO WIDE-RANGING DISCUSSIONS OF THE SITUATION IN LEBANON; SAID THE TIMES. AND THE PAPER SAID THAT CARTER CONDUCTED A LONG, SECRET ROUND OF TALKS THROUGH OFFICIALS OF SEVERAL ARAB COUNTRIES TO TRY TO PROD ARAFAT TOWARD RECOGNIZING ISRAEL'S SOVEREIGNTY.

IN 1975, THE ISRAELIS GOT A WRITTEN PROMISE FROM KISSINGER THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD "NOT RECOGNIZE OR NEGOTIATE WITH THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION SO LONG AS THE PLO DOES NOT RECOGNIZE ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST..."

BUT THE TIMES QUOTED AN UNNAMED U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT SOURCE AS SAYING THAT DESPITE PROMISES AND PUBLIC STATEMENTS, FOUR SUCCESSIVE ADMINISTRATIONS HAVE FOUND THAT SECRET DEALINGS WITH THE PLO ARE "ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY."

IN 1976, THE NEWSPAPER SAID, KISSINGER WROTE ARAFAT A LETTER OF THANKS FOR THE PLO'S HELP IN GUARANTEEING SECURITY FOR THE EVACUATION OF U.S. PERSONNEL IN BEIRUT DURING THE LEBANESE CIVIL WAR.

IN 1979, CARTER'S AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ANDREW YOUNG, WAS ASKED TO RESIGN AFTER HIS UNAUTHORIZED CONVERSATIONS WITH THE PLO'S U.N. OBSERVER BECAME PUBLIC; EVEN THOUGH HIS TALKS ON A PROCEOURAL U.N. MATTER HAD BEEN LESS SUBSTANTIVE THAN THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S PREVIOUS CONTACTS WITH THE PLO; THE TIMES SAID.

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